

CEI Technical Workshop

SMEs internationalization

*Three days together to prepare joint project concept-proposals
on forthcoming EU SME Programmes*

Hands-on practical training on project conceptualization and proposal preparation, learning from European, Italian and Slovenian Best Practices

Sezana (SL), 2nd - 4th April 2008

Venue Inkubator d.o.o Sezana
Address: Kraska ulica 2, 6210 Sezana (Slovenija)





EBN is the leading pan-European network bringing together 200+ Business and Innovation Centres (BICs) and similar organizations such as incubators and entrepreneurship centres across the enlarged Europe. EBN was created almost 25 years ago by the European Commission and European industry leaders. EBN is a Brussels-based team coordinating members' activities and providing services to them ranging from EC-BIC Quality support to international projects and events.

This Technical Workshop is organized in cooperation with BIC Friuli Venezia Giulia.

BIC FVG is committed to fostering economic development and entrepreneurship in the North Eastern region of Italy. This objective is pursued with enthusiasm and professionalism through a wide set of activities addressing all needs of local and regional development through SMEs creation, internationalization and innovation. BIC FVG is actively engaged in cross-border and trans-national cooperation projects aiming at implementing the EU policies for growth and competitiveness.



BIC FVG is a full member of the EBN Network.

This Technical Workshop is organized in cooperation with P&D Consulting:



P&D Consulting supports entrepreneurs and managers, confronted with change. A challenge requiring competence and maturity combined with methodology and determination.

P&D Consulting services cover Strategy and Business development, Marketing and internationalization of business, Business Planning and Modelling, Financial Effectiveness and Governance. Its services are addressed to middle and small-sized businesses, both from the public and private sector.

P&D Consulting believes in using experience "networks" to go beyond any geographical and cultural boundaries.

This Technical Workshop is supported by CEI



Background information

EU and National Policy Makers of new and old Member States are giving strong importance on the need of improving capacity of public and private actors to design policies and to implement support programmes specifically aimed at SME internationalization.

As a matter of fact, in the European Union countries, and more significantly in the Central Eastern and South Eastern European countries, **SMEs find it more difficult than large enterprises to have cross-border activities within the European Internal Market and in third countries markets.**

Recent analyses in 27 EU have made it clear that only 24% of small and 25% of medium enterprises claim to be prepared to go to another country.

For this reason the European Commission has indicated in 2007/2013 CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Programme) **SME internationalization** as one of the development priorities to support job creation and economic growth in the European Union. Similar objectives are pursued by the forthcoming INTERREG IV Programme.

In several European countries, particularly in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe, there is a clear evidence of market failure which creates barriers preventing SMEs to achieve their full potential.

Among others, obstacles hampering SME access to international markets include:

- lack of entrepreneurial human capital in terms of international business skills, low international oriented business approach;
- no sufficient environmental perception, and management know-how;
- lack or low level of other human resources with sufficient knowledge on foreign markets and specific technical skills;
- capacity to identify foreign business opportunities
- shortage of working capital to finance exports;

It is mainly a Government's responsibility **to design and implement specific policies and support programmes aimed to small business internationalization.**

This is why improving the skills of policy makers and transferring know-how from old Member States to new ones, becomes a priority.

The Objective of the EBN Technical Workshop on "SMEs Internationalization" is to facilitate the transfer of know-how between policy makers and practitioners that operate across the frontier of new and old Europe, to stimulate the right **conducive environment** needed to support SMEs international activities. It will also be a place where participants will share ideas and find partners to develop a first draft of new projects together.

CIP and new INTERREG IV financing is available to all EU as well as non-member States, including West Balkan States that are members of the CEI. The workshop intends to train key development actors to learn EU programming opportunities, key development instruments (e.g. BICs, Clusters, etc.) and initiatives, as well as set basis for concrete project identification, partnership detection and proposal preparation.

Target Group:	The Workshop is open to policy makers, SMEs support organization and intermediaries of the South Eastern Europe wishing to improve their skills at supporting SMEs' internationalization taking advantage of available EU programmes and instruments. The seminar is also open to intermediaries and business support practitioners from old and new EU member states, who are interested in strengthening linkages and business cooperation with South Eastern Europe.
Seminar Objective:	The Workshop aims at improving the participants' knowledge of available EC Programmes in support of SMEs competitiveness, innovation and internationalization. Through practical work and exploration of concrete project opportunities, the Seminar aims at show-casing methodologies and best practices of internationalization and clustering. The seminar will also be an excellent opportunity for networking with potential Partner organizations from South Eastern Europe and from the EU. Networking is a key factor for the SMEs' growth and competitiveness, and a prerequisite for participating to EU financed programmes. Working groups will make use of advanced Group Dynamics techniques which will be applied to facilitate the participants' learning and stimulate an interactive exchange to identify key project issues.

Draft Programme - day 1

Wednesday 2nd April 2008
09:30 Registration & Welcome

SESSION 1

10h00 - 11h30

Fostering SMEs' dimensional growth through internationalization:

An analysis of the difficulties hampering SMEs' capacity to embrace internationalization.

Entering a new market requires a consistent effort in several directions, as many barriers exist due to the differences in legislative, cultural and economic backgrounds. EU programmes and Policies offer a strategy to overcome these difficulties. This Session will provide an insight on the EU policies and the main SMEs support instruments.

- Panellist
- **Daniela Fiori**, Permanent Representation of Italy to the European Union
 - **Edoardo Augusto**, IAPMEI, Portugal
 - **Francesco D'Aprile**, P&D Consulting, Italy

11.30 Coffee break

SESSION 2

12h00 – 13h00

International Organizations supporting SMEs internationalization: an overview of the Programs and the existing approaches.

The objective of session 2 is to provide an overview of the international programs, priorities and objectives, the beneficiaries, and the instruments made available. The session will host the speeches of the Central European Initiative and of the EBRD.

- Panellist
- **Amb. Harald Kreid**, CEI Alternate Director General
 - **Zdenka Vicarova**, EBRD - Head of the RO in Ljubljana

13h00 – 14h30 Lunch break

SESSION 3

14h30 – 16h00

What Networks can do to help players meeting each other's interests in the international arena: the example of the EBN Network.

EBN the European Business & Innovation Centre Network, brings together business support operators from both East and West of Europe, this session will therefore address the added value of being part of a large network, the best practices in cooperation and SMEs internationalization.

- Panellist
- **Jacques Pronk**, EBN Senior Advisor
 - **Antonio Sfiligoj**, Managing Director BIC FVG

16.00 Coffee break

SESSION 4

16h30 – 18h00

What business operators do to help SMEs entering new markets: the BIC model.

BICs (Business & Innovation Centres) are on the front line of SMEs creation, support and development. How do they operate? How do they answer the need for opening up to international markets? How do they enhance SMEs competitiveness? How do they define innovation?

- Panellist
- **Susan Arundale Scott**, EBN Quality & Membership Development Manager
 - **Milen Dobrev**, Manager Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce

19.30 Dinner

Draft Programme - day 2

Thursday 3rd April 2008

SESSION 1

09h30 – 11h00

How to exploit regional differences and to build on commonalities to foster SMEs internationalization: lessons learned from Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia

This session will highlight both the barriers to and the facilitating elements for SMEs internationalization, by looking at what has been already done in Friuli Venezia Giulia and in Slovenia. The session will also discuss the economic sectors where cooperation between the two regions has failed, and will analyze the SMEs' strategic recommendations being pursued.

- Panellist
- **Stojan Gorup**, Inkubator d.o.o Sezana (Slovenija)
 - **Roberto Bernadis**, BIC FVG, Trieste (Italy)
 - **Paul Corson**, Office of Europe – US Department of Commerce

11h00 Coffee break

SESSION 2

11h30 – 13h00

Improving relations with investors (venture capitalists, banks, business angels, etc.) to support SMEs' access to new markets

This session will provide an overview of the key elements investors look for when evaluating whether a business is ready for receiving support. The session will also open the discussion over the possibility to build links between investors, investment institutes and investment instruments across different countries, in order to facilitate cross-border and international activities.

- Panellist
- **Edoardo Augusto**, IAPMEI, Portugal
 - **Antonio Sfiligoj**, Managing Director BIC FVG

13h00 – 14h30 Lunch break

SESSION 3

14h30 – 16h00

What are the new trends in management techniques specialized in SMEs internationalization?

This session will analyze the latest trends in "internationalization management", do golden rules exist? If so, what are the key management element that can favour internalization? What can business support centre do to help stimulating the right management skills? What are the national instruments, in terms of life-long learning, legislations, etc. that can be looked at as "best practices"?

- Panellist
- **Gerard Bonnes**, CICOM and EOS coordinator
 - **Mateja Vadnjaj**, Director General Small Business Support Centre of Ljubljana
 - **Francesco D'Aprile**, P&D Consulting, Italy

16.00 Coffee break

SESSION 4

16h30 – 18h00

International Clusters of SMEs.

Several European Commission initiatives have emphasized the importance of Clusters as an efficient instrument to boost SMEs competitiveness and internationalization. How to establish a cluster? How do clusters operate? How do they facilitate SMEs' access to external markets?

- Panellist
- **Joe Greaney**, Managing Director of WEST BIC Ireland
 - **Elena Colonna**, BIC FVG

19.30 Dinner

Draft Programme - day 3

Friday 4th April 2008

SESSION 1

09h00 – 09h20

Practical tips on how to prepare a project proposal for SMEs internationalization.

This session will offer a practical training on the essential elements that need to be looked at when preparing a project proposal. How to identify the project partners and to set up a consortium; how to approach bid writing; how to prepare the project's budget.

Panellist

- Elena Colonna, BIC FVG
- Eleonora Sambasile, EBN

SESSION 2

09h20 – 09h30

Presentation of projects' ideas collected during registration:

In this session the project ideas submitted by participants will be presented in a short summary and will be grouped by category.

Panellist

- Eleonora Sambasile, BIC FVG "Summary of the project ideas submitted"

Session 3

09h30 – 11h00

Interactive working groups: practical exercise to brainstorm on project ideas and future cooperation opportunities.

Based on group dynamics techniques, participants will be divided in two working groups, to elaborate on the ideas and concepts presented during the first two days of the training. Experienced trainers will moderate the discussion of the working group and will guide participants in a practical exercise that will help the group formulate project proposal and a common working strategy.

11h00 coffee break

SESSION 4

11h30 – 13h00

Continuation of interactive working groups, presentation of the working groups results and open discussion.

13h00 conclusive lunch

From 14h00 to 18h00 STUDY TOUR TO TRIESTE INCUBATOR

All participants are invited to take part in the study tour to the Trieste Incubator.

The Incubator hosts about 36 incubated enterprises, from sectors such as Biotech/Robotics/ICT. The study tour is free of charge: a shuttle bus will drive participants from Sezana to Trieste, and from Trieste back to Sezana. Please confirm your attendance in advance.

Practical Information

Registration

Registration on site starts at 09h30 on Wednesday 2nd April.

Registration to the Workshop is compulsory, if you have not received the registration form you can download it on the following webpage:

<http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=248>

Venue Address:

Inkubator d.o.o Sezana

Kraska ulica 2

Sezana (Slovenija)

Taxi number in Sezana: +386 41 621 347

Workshop Schedule:

- **Wednesday 2nd April:** starting time 09h30 – finishing time 18h00 - Dinner at 19h30
- **Thursday 3rd April:** Starting time 09h30 – finishing time 18h00 - Dinner at 19h30
- **Friday 4th April:** Starting time 09h00 – finishing time 13h00 (with conclusive lunch)
- **Friday 4th April afternoon:** Study tour to the incubator in Trieste from 14h00 to 18h00

How to reach Sezana from Ljubljana airport:

The nearest airport is located in Ljubljana (Slovenia) or in Trieste (Italy)

From Ljubljana Airport	From Trieste Airport
By Taxi: the taxi ride should cost about 120 € and it would take about 45 min. (taxi phone number +386 4206 16 78)	From Trieste Airport you can reach Trieste city centre by an airport coach. Ticket costs 10€ and the trip lasts 30 minutes.
By Bus: buses connecting Ljubljana airport with Sezana, depart every hour from 8h00 to 21h00 you can check the bus timetable by following this link: http://www.ap-ljubljana.si/eng/vozni_eng.php?ulfr=1	From Trieste city centre you can take a taxi to Sezana. The taxi ride should cost about 50 € and should take about 30 minutes.
By Train: The trip takes about 1h50' . you can check the train time-table at the following webpage: http://www.slo-zeleznice.si/en/inland_transport/timetable_with_prices/?url=mode%3D4%26from%3D215%26to%3D105%26via%3D-1%26DepFrom%3D0%26ArrFrom%3D0%26DepTo%3D0%26ArrTo%3D0%26OSTime%3D180%26fordate%3D01-04-2008	

Contact & Enquiries

For general Enquiries you can contact

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/// email: esa@ebn.be Or Ms **Eleonora Quadrelli** mobile +39 346 84 50 460

Accommodation

You can request the hotel booking form to Eleonora Quadrelli

Email address: quadrelli@bic.fvg.it / phone number +39 040 899 22 81

Please fill in the hotel booking form and send it back to Ms Quadrelli before March 21st